Department of
PLANNING & ENGINEERING
Division of Planning

V. B.

To: Planning Commission

Via: Brandol Harvey, AICP, Chief of Planning

From: Christopher S. Lawrence, AICP, Comprehensive Planner

Date: February 25, 2005

Subject: 2005 Comprehensive Plan Annual Amendment Proposals

The following items are submitted to the Planning Commission for review and consideration for the 2005 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments. They include the following general topics:

1. Tom's Creek Sewer
2. Greenway Chapter – Corridor Classification System
3. Airport Related Amendments
    a. Transportation Chapter – Airport Section
    b. Southend Chapter
4. Alley/Unbuilt Right-of-way Amendments
    a. Transportation Chapter - Alley Section
5. Miller Southside Neighborhood Master Plan
6. Rt.460 Interchange – Surplus VDOT property

The Long Range Committee elected to include item number 6 as information for the 2005 Amendment Package to allow an opportunity for public education and awareness of the upcoming project by the Blacksburg Partnership. Excerpts from the 2001 Comprehensive Plan are included regarding the future development of the 36-acre residual property created as part of the VDOT Rt. 460-bypass interchange project. No revisions are recommended at this time. However, revisions may be considered as part of this amendment review and will be appropriately advertised to the public and open for public comment and review.

1. Tom's Creek Sewer

Retain *Tom's Creek Gravity Sewer System Concept* Map as Figure US-11b.

Update *Northwest Sector Chapter Critical Issues* Map to remove 2003 amendments and return it to its original 2001 status.

UTILITY SERVICES CHAPTER
Public Wastewater System,
Wastewater Service Area Section

The Town of Blacksburg serves roughly 4,300 acres with sanitary sewer in the town limits (approximately 35 percent of Town). Sewer service is available to most of the land area within the corporate limits east of the Route 460 Bypass, and a few areas west of the Bypass. Several areas west of the Bypass in the Tom's Creek Basin are *serviced* ~~currently served~~ by pumping stations or septic tank submersible pumps that transfer sewer effluent back into the Stroubles Creek Basin. The remainder of the Tom's Creek Basin is ~~currently~~ unsewered along with areas on the northern end of Town bordering North Main Street and the area south of the Industrial Park within Town.

Wastewater Monitoring Section

The Town has installed ~~one~~ wastewater flow monitor*s* for purposes of determining base flows during both dry and wet weather conditions, including droughts and large rainstorms *throughout the town*. ~~In 2003, the flow monitor was located just below Prices Fork Road and Turner Street in the West Stroubles Sewershed. At this location, the monitor has shown inadequate sewer capacities during large rainstorms. The monitor demonstrates that the sewer overflow is not only due to added development, but also inflow and infiltration in the sewershed.~~

Opportunities Section

- A Septic Tank Effluent Pumping (STEP) and Gravity (STEG) system exists in the Tom's Creek Basin as a pilot program to provide operation and maintenance information for the Town. This ~~project has~~ provide~~d~~*s* the town with *an opportunity to broaden its* ~~information to better evaluate various~~ wastewater options, *to consider* costs and environmental issues, and *to explore* innovative systems for the Tom's Creek Basin. ~~It also demonstrates an alternative means of sewer collection for discharge into the Tom's Creek centralized gravity sewer collection system.~~

Challenges Section

- Funding an environmentally sensitive public wastewater service to the Tom's Creek Basin where initial construction, operation, maintenance, and long term replacement costs do not significantly increase rates to the rest of Town.

- Sections of the older West Stroubles sewer collection system and pump stations ~~(i.e., the North Main Street/Giles Road corridors)~~ are experiencing overflows and backups due to age, condition, inflow, infiltration, and the proliferation of pump stations adding flow from outside the natural drainage area for which the system was designed. *In addition, some sanitary sewer backups occur due to inflow and infiltration.*

~~♦ Sections of the McBryde Village sewershed and University City Boulevard sewershed collection systems are at or over carrying capacity.~~

What is Changing?,
Public Wastewater Area Section

Blacksburg has obtained new wastewater service areas both within Town and out of Town through negotiations with the county (See *Figure US-8).* In addition, service is provided to existing areas in Town through capital improvement and cost share projects. *Planning for the construction of a public wastewater service in the Tom's Creek Basin is one of the town's major wastewater projects. Council is seeking the best option taking into consideration cost, environmental impact, reliability, and feasibility. Council is carefully evaluating several options. One option would utilize alternative, decentralized sewer technologies and treatment that as recommended by the Tom's Creek Sewerage Options Working Group. Another option is the construction of a centralized sanitary sewer trunk line with a pump station use to transport wastewater to the treatment plant. A final option is a hybrid wastewater system that combines small-diameter pressure collection lines with pump stations that also transports effluent to the treatment plant. Benefits of an alternative, decentralized system include lower collection costs, utilization of innovative technologies, and efficient on-site treatment of wastewater effluent. A hybrid system would also include lower collection costs while employing innovative technology. In contrast, a centralized, gravity line option efficiently utilizes the available capacity and advanced treatment processes of the treatment plant, and will eliminate most of the town's sanitary sewer pump stations thereby reducing capacity pressure on the West Stroubles trunk line. Any of the above options will enable clustered, residential development, in this area of marginal septic sites, and meet the community's vision for sensitive development and the preservation of open space throughout the Tom's Creek Basin.*

~~The most immediate wastewater challenge for the Town at this time is to alleviate the overburdened sanitary sewer system serving the West Stroubles, McBryde, and University City Boulevard sewersheds. The lack of sewerage service to the Tom's Creek Basin has forced all development within it either to use private septic fields or to install pumping stations that discharge into these three sewershed collection systems. The West Stroubles sewer lines were not designed to carry flows from the Tom's Creek Basin; consequently, lines are overflowing. Additionally, all sanitary sewer lines, inside or outside of these three sewersheds, receive rainwater inflow and groundwater infiltration because of their aging conditions. Inflow and infiltration coupled with the excess sewer discharges from outside areas, have caused a capacity shortage in the sanitary sewer system. The sanitary sewer flow monitor installed in the West Stroubles Sewershed confirms these conditions.~~

~~Options that Council has considered to resolve this capacity deficiency include:~~

~~♦ construction of a new force main along the Route 460 bypass to offload existing pump stations currently discharging from the Tom's Creek Basin into the three~~

burdened sewersheds;

- ♦ upgrading sections of the North Main and Giles sewer lines in the West Stroubles sewershed;
- ♦ constructing Deep Cell lagoons at the pump stations to offload sewer;
- ♦ constructing a centralized gravity sewer line in the Tom's Creek Basin to carry wastewater from the Tom's Creek Basin.

In addition to resolving the existing capacity issue, Council has also considered the provision of public sewer for the Tom's Creek Basin that provides "adequate and reliable utility services … through safe, environmentally sensitive, and cost efficient methods". Council has carefully evaluated several options taking into consideration cost, construction impacts, reliability, and feasibility. These options included a

- ♦ STEP/STEG hybrid collection system;
- ♦ Tom's Creek sewer gravity collection system;
- ♦ STEP/STEG collection to Recirculating Sand Filter System.

The two former systems involve collecting the sewer and transporting it to the Blacksburg/VPI&SU Sanitation Authority, whereas the latter proposal would decentralize treatment facilities throughout the Basin area.

Council has identified that the Tom's Creek sewer gravity collection system is most appropriate for the Basin should be constructed because it provides offloading of critical line sections of the West Stroubles Sewershed, and would could serve as a main collection system for all new development in the Tom's Creek Basin. This centralized sewer system would be sized only to serve the Future Land Use prescription as contained within this plan. Other options aimed at alleviating capacity problems, however, would require an additional wastewater collection system or treatment system in the Tom's Creek Basin. In addition, the Council determined that the Tom's Creek sewer provides known operation and maintenance costs for the Town in the future as opposed to the other wastewater options.

In 2003, Council committed to serve the Tom's Creek Basin with a public centralized gravity sewer system to both alleviate the capacity problems in the West Stroubles Sewershed and to serve the basin with a safe, reliable system for the future. Planning, design, funding, and construction of a public gravity wastewater system in the Tom's Creek Basin is the town's major wastewater project. A description of the project includes a gravity, sanitary sewer interceptor to collect wastewater and transport it to a pumping station where it is then transferred to the treatment facility. Several installed trunk lines will deliver wastewater from each of the existing pumping stations to offload the three over-capacity sewersheds. Other trunk lines will be installed to collect wastewater from new development in the Basin, to the interceptor below. This option will enable clustered, residential development in an area of marginal septic sites, to meet the community's vision for sensitive development and the preservation of open space throughout the Tom's Creek Basin. As proposed on the future land use map, the Tom's Creek Basin development maximum build-out is one unit per acre. The Tom's Creek

~~sewer will be designed to accommodate this density and no more. The map shown is one possible build-out scenario that would preserve over 50 percent of the land as open space, cluster development, and efficiently utilize the public wastewater system (See Figure US-11a). Tom's Creek gravity sewer will alleviate over-capacity sewer lines in the West Stroubles Creek Sewershed and does not prohibit the use of STEP or STEG wastewater systems as an option for new development in Tom's Creek Basin as it develops. The following analysis is one possible build-out scenario that would preserve over 50 percent of the land as open space, cluster development, and efficiently utilize any of the above public wastewater systems (See Figure US-11).~~

Figure US-11b shows the concept route of *a* ~~the~~ Tom's Creek central sewer. ~~The pump stations at Shenandoah I & II, Brookfield, Shawnee, Sturbridge, Westover Hills, and Karr Heights will no longer be necessary because wastewater will be transported by gravity lines through the Tom's Creek Basin, rather than pumped into the West Stroubles Sewershed. To alleviate sewer capacity problems in the West Stroubles, McBryde Village, and University City Boulevard sewer systems, the priority sewer line trunks will need to be constructed (as shown in orange on Figure US-11b. These include the Tom's Creek Pumping Station, Tom's Creek Force Main, Tom's Creek Connector, Tom's Creek Interceptor, Cricketts Court Trunk, Karr Heights Trunk, and the Shawnee Trunk. In order to eliminate the remaining pumping stations, the Sturbridge, Brown/Westover, two pump stations, the Shenandoah trunk line would be constructed.~~

Current System Upgrade

Programs to evaluate and correct excessive inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer system include a root control maintenance program and the replacement or lining of aged or damaged pipes. Inflow and infiltration are monitored through the use of a flow monitor, camera, smoke testing, and dye testing. Lines that are identified as having excessive inflow and infiltration are replaced or lined using innovative technologies such as in-situ form lining. Town staff works with homeowners to develop alternative discharge points for roof drains, sump pumps, and other inappropriate connections that impact the system's limited capacity. The existing sanitary sewer lines in the Stroubles Creek sewershed *will* need to be offloaded from the Tom's Creek sewershed.

General Policies,

- ❑ The cost of restoring sensitive environmental areas, such as forested, wetland, and riparian areas, damaged during public utility construction will be included with the utility's construction cost.

Action Strategies,
in general

- ➢ Reduce inflow and infiltration by disconnecting sump pumps from wastewater lines, disconnecting drain spouts from wastewater lines, manhole waterproofing, and lining critical pipes where replacement or repair is not feasible due to depth or traffic interruption.

- Aggressively enforce Town and State Codes that address contractor related Sanitary Sewer Overflows.

- Use Capital Improvement Program funds to upgrade and replace sanitary sewer lines and reduce inflow and infiltration.

- Upgrade pumping stations and eliminate them where possible.

within 5 years **Section**

- Create an educational program to provide citizens information on the cost, benefits and methods to prevent inflow and infiltration at home.

- Identify "at risk" inflow and infiltration sites. Take corrective action to reduce the inflow and infiltration at these sites.

- Investigate and, if appropriate, enact an incentive based program to address and correct inflow and infiltration problems on private property. This incentive based program may include monetary enticements on utility bills.

- Investigate and, if appropriate, enact an ordinance to allow for corrective action to be taken to address inflow issues on private property.

- Implement a preventive maintenance program for sewer systems located in the flood plain.

- Evaluate decentralized sewer technologies, gravity sanitary sewer systems, and a hybrid system utilizing the STEP*/STEG* method to determine the most effective wastewater service and funding option for the Tom's Creek Basin. ~~(Completed July, 2003).~~

- *Consider implementation, monitoring, and maintenance of a decentralized wastewater system.*

- Document existing environmental and ecological conditions ~~in Tom's Creek~~ prior to the construction of ~~the~~ *any* sewer system to provide baseline ecological information on *any affected creek.* ~~the creek's condition.~~

- ~~Complete the design of the Tom's Creek centralized gravity sewer system per Figure US-11b. This centralized sewer system would be sized only to serve the Future Land Use prescription as contained within this plan.~~

- ~~Begin the construction of the Tom's Creek centralized gravity sewer system per Figure US-11b. This centralized sewer system would be sized only to serve the Future~~

~~Land Use prescription as contained within this plan.~~

- ~~Once construction is completed, begin the restoration of riparian areas damaged during the construction of the Tom's creek centralized gravity sewer system. The cost of restoring forested, wetland, and riparian areas, as feasible, along Tom's Creek will be included as part of the sewer system's construction cost.~~

- ~~Replace and upgrade with current technology the Forest Hills, Murphy, and Givens pump stations.~~

- ~~Reduce the flows within the Stroubles Creek sanitary sewer system by off-loading wastewater loads to the Tom's Creek sewer system.~~ *Offload, replace, or upgrade sections of gravity sewer lines in the Stroubles Creek sewershed identified as being at capacity in the CIP.*

within 25 years **Section**

- ~~Complete the construction of the Tom's Creek centralized gravity sewer system per Figure US-11b. This centralized sewer system would be sized only to serve the Future Land Use prescription as contained within this plan.~~

- ~~Complete the restoration of riparian areas damaged during the construction of the Tom's creek centralized gravity sewer system.~~

SHAPING THE FUTURE CHAPTER

Conservation of Open Space Section

Either ~~A~~ public ~~centralized gravity sewer system~~ *or regional alternative wastewater treatment facilities* will be constructed in the [Tom's Creek] area to support the development clusters and maintain the operational effectiveness of the central town sewer system by eliminating pump stations that stress that system. ~~Until the sewer line is completed development in the Tom's Creek area will continue to be limited by available septic sites until a public sewerage system is constructed. However, it is anticipated that this constraint will reduce as sewage disposal technology advances and systems can be located where historically the soils would not support septic.~~

The Tom's Creek Basin, which spans over four neighborhood planning areas, contains most of the undeveloped area within the town. If by 2046 this area was developed at the *current* maximum density of one unit per acre under the clustering provisions of the ordinance, this area could support approximately 7,500 new residents or 42% of the population growth anticipated through 2046.

COMMUNITY DESIGN CHAPTER

What is Changing **Section**

The town ~~has~~ is **investigate**~~d~~*ing* **the most effective public wastewater treatment system to install in the Tom's Creek Basin** ~~**and has determined that a public central collection sewer system**~~ ***sized only to serve the Future Land Use prescription contained within this plan*** ~~**should be constructed.**~~ The installation of a ~~public wastewater~~ system will result in increased development pressures in this area of Town. In addition, it will provide an opportunity for different styles of development. ~~, as well as allow for the replacement of private septic/drain fields which typically have higher failure rates than public wastewater systems.~~

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CHAPTER

Background,
Land Resources **Section**

Erosion and sedimentation, groundwater pollution, flooding, drainage problems, failed septic systems, and construction problems are all possible when soil characteristics are not considered when developing land. Blacksburg's topography includes slopes greater than seven percent, which means these areas are susceptible to soil erosion. These areas of high erosion potential do not exist in large blocks of land, but instead they are interspersed throughout Town. Also, few unsewered areas of the town are well suited for septic system drainfields. This suggests that wastewater handling may be a constraint for large-scale developments in the Tom's Creek Basin watershed ~~until~~ *unless* either centralized sewer is extended to the area or a decentralized system – *divided into treatment clusters* according to the topography and other physical constraints – is approved by the town *and used by developers*. ~~Of the many decentralized systems studied by the Tom's Creek Working Group, the preferred decentralized system would be a Septic Tank Effluent Gravity (STEG) sewer with a series of sandfilters, publicly operated and maintained.~~ *Several different decentralized or hybrid sewerage options are available and could serve from ten to twenty clusters. They would average service for 100-300 houses with each residence containing septic tank effluent gravity sewer (STEG) or septic tank effluent pressure (STEP) collection systems.*

Action Strategies,
in general **Section**

- Protect the natural course and flow of streams *as a first priority* by suggesting alternatives to stream channeling and piping.

GREENWAYS CHAPTER
Action Strategies,

within 5 years **Section**

- ~~Acquire Greenway easements per the Greenway Master Plan in the Tom's Creek Basin, where feasible and owner is willing, as utility easements are being obtained for the creation of the Tom's Creek Sewer System.~~

***within 25 years* Section**

- ~~Where feasible and where the owner is willing, after the construction of the Tom's Creek Sewer System is completed, construct a Greenway Trail per the Greenway Master Plan.~~

NORTHWEST SECTOR CHAPTER

***Critical Issues* Section**

Public wastewater systems are not provided to the majority of the residents in the sector. Sewer service is only provided to the Glade-Westover neighborhood. Capacity in the town's sewer system is limited and few new connections can be accommodated without the construction of a centralized sewer system in the Tom's Creek Basin. Construction of sewer to serve this area was ~~addressed in the annexation decree, entered October 23, 1970.~~ *a condition of the 1973 annexation by the town.*~~ It required the Town to:~~

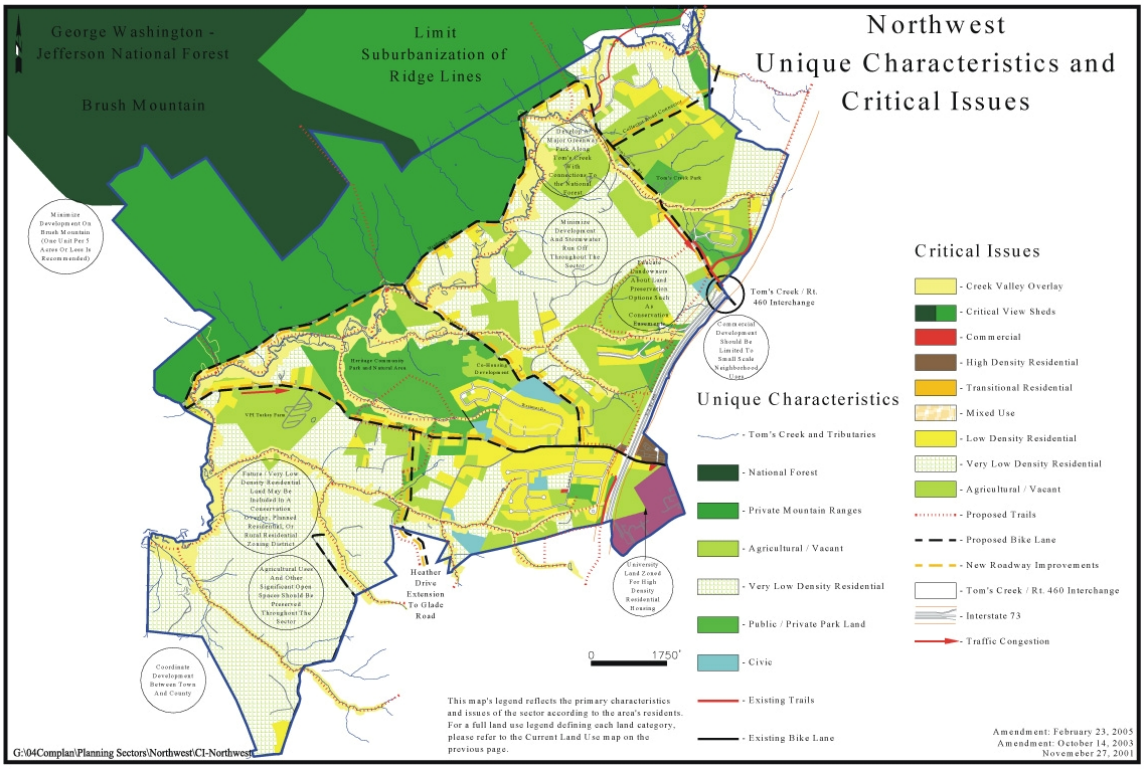
~~"proceed with its announced plans of extending sewer service to the area decreed to be annexed by providing adequate sewers throughout the area as indicated on Town Map Exhibit M-11, the total cost of which is shown on Town Exhibit C-3, except that the priorities for the installation of said lines is hereby decreed to be amended as follows: Priority number one lines shall be installed not later than three years from the effective date of this decree; priority two lines shall be installed from three to five years from the effective date of this decree and priority three lines shall be installed not later than from five to eight years from the effective date of this decree. . . . In interpreting this decree insofar as water and sewer extensions are concerned, the Court is cognizant of the fact that there is no necessity of the installment of such lines simply to cover an area unless some development requires it."~~

~~Map M-11 was a map of the Town which was submitted as an exhibit by the Town to the Court. It shows "Proposed Sanitary Sewers in 1972 Annexation Area." The map showed the color-coded three priorities of sewer lines, with a sewer main running parallel to Meadow brook Drive, Glade Road, Redbud Road, Bishop Road, Mount Tabor Road, Happy Hollow Road, and Tom's Creek Road, as the first priority line. It also showed sewer service to Westover Hills as a "first priority." Finally, the Merrimac area is shown as a "first priority."~~

Town Council ~~has~~ *is* research~~ed~~*ing* the feasibility of decentralized wastewater treatment systems as an alternative to a centralized system. ~~There are several systems that may effectively serve the sector but lower installation costs may be offset by higher maintenance costs over time.~~ Council *will implement a public wastewater system once* ~~has also completed~~ *a final cost/benefit comparison study* ~~and determined that a central~~

~~gravity central collection sewer system sized only to serve the Future Land Use prescription as contained within this plan should be constructed~~ *has been completed*. When *a* ~~the~~ public ~~gravity~~ sewer*age* system is constructed, proper land use regulations must remain in place to preserve the community's preferred development pattern.

Proposed Amendment to Northwest Sector Unique Characteristics and Critical Issues Map:



2. Greenway Chapter

General Policy

Develop a Corridor classification system that establishes different design requirements for specific trail functions. The system should include all corridor uses. These functions may include multi-use, single-use, high-speed travel for bicycle commuters, recreational, pedestrians, or other defined uses.

3. Airport Related Amendments

a. Transportation Chapter - Airport Section

What is Changing
Runway Protection Zone

The Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) is a defined trapezoidal shaped area that extends beyond the end of each runway. The RPZ's function is to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground. The RPZ requirements are established by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and are enforceable under the jurisdiction of the Airport Authority. Land uses prohibited from the RPZ are: residences and places of public assembly (churches, schools, office buildings, shopping centers and other uses with similar concentrations of persons typify places of public assembly). Fuel storage facilities should not be located in the RPZ.

There are four major structures located within the RPZ along South Main Street. The Airport Authority is required by the FAA to clear the RPZ areas (and maintain them as clear) of incompatible objects and activities. In 2004, the Airport Authority began the process of acquiring these properties in order to clear the area of incompatible land use. The enforcement of the RPZ results in vacant land that will be owned by the Airport Authority. The land is located in a primarily commercial area of South Main Street and is part of the entrance corridor into town from the 460-bypass. The Airport Authority should give careful consideration to the future use and maintenance of the property due to its highly visible location.

Challenges

Improvements and expansions to the airport and its use may *alter* ~~jeopardize~~ the appearance, ~~safety,~~ and character of the town, particularly the adjacent residential neighborhoods *and commercial properties along South Main Street.*

ACTION STRATEGIES
in general

Encourage the Airport Authority to incorporate some level of public use to the vacant property created by the enforcement of the Runway Protection Zone. The property may serve as a trailhead to the Cedar Run Greenway system as well as a Town of Blacksburg Welcome Kiosk

b. South End Chapter

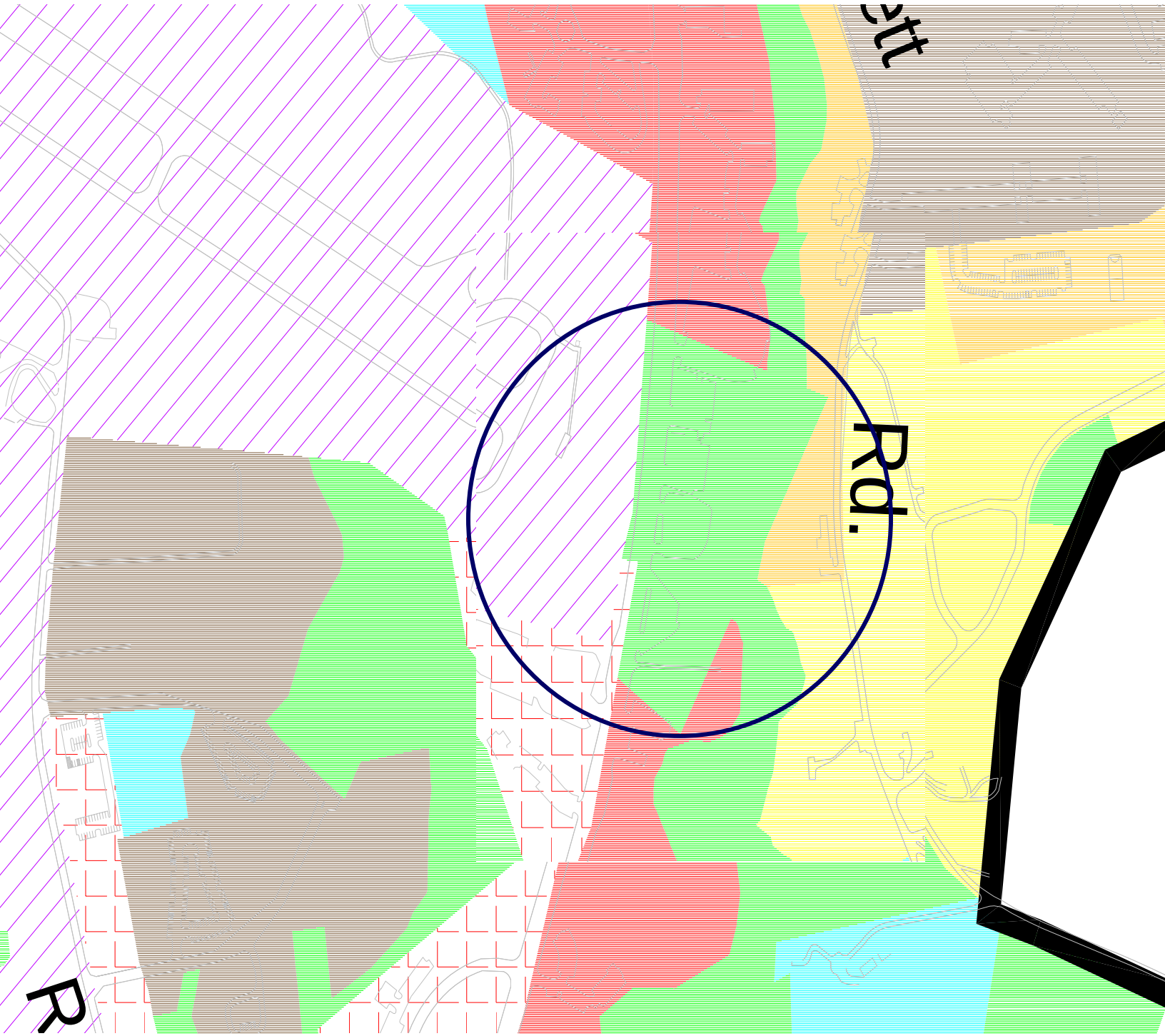
Critical Issues

Presence of the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport is both a potential benefit and a concern. The enforcement of the Runway Protection Zone results in the removal of commercial property along South Main Street. The commercial corridor in this area is the primary entrance to town. The resulting vacant property within the RPZ should be carefully planned to provide some public benefit. In addition, the property should be well landscaped and maintained to provide high quality entrance corridor into Town while meeting the appropriate Federal safety requirements for an RPZ.

Opportunities

Enforcement of the Runway Protection Zone by the Airport Authority creates a large area of vacant property along the entrance corridor to the south end of town. This property may provide an opportunity for a trailhead to the Cedar Run Greenway, a Town of Blacksburg Welcome Kiosk or other public function.

South End Chapter - Future Land Use Map Change



4. Alleys and Unbuilt Rights-of-way Amendments

a. Transportation Chapter – Alley Section

Unbuilt Streets
Before Blacksburg had a subdivision ordinance, a number of subdivisions were developed in which streets were platted but not built. These streets belong to the town in that the right-of-way was dedicated to the town through the recordation of the plat. Most of these streets have never been constructed and appear as extensions of yards or overgrown areas. These "paper streets" vary in right-of-way width. Some of them meet the VDOT requirement of 50-foot right-of-way width for local streets, while others have much smaller rights-of-way. Future road or bike-walkway construction could take place on some of these rights-of-way in order to improve the overall transportation function of the town. In other cases they may contribute to the town's *bikeway/*greenway network. ~~or may serve no current or future Town purposes.~~

Opportunities

♦ The alley *and unbuilt street* network provides opportunities for the expansion of multi-modal uses.

♦ The alley and unbuilt street *network* ~~properties~~ provide a base for development of a townwide *bikeway/*greenway network.

♦ Alleys *and unbuilt streets* provide opportunities for utility services at the rear of properties.

Challenges

♦ *Vacation requests have historically only served individual property owner's interests. These vacations have removed rights-of-way from the town's system which can no longer be accessed by the public or used for any future project. In certain cases public access or utility easements are retained to preserve some future possibility of use.*

♦ *The Comprehensive Plan sets forth general policies and master plans for transportation and bikeway/greenway networks that propose the use of certain unbuilt alleys and rights-of-way. If rights-of-way that are not specifically identified for future use are vacated, this may limit future neighborhood plans for the implementation or extension of multi-modal means of transportation and use of this unbuilt networks.*

What is Changing

In most towns and cities in Virginia, the trend has been to vacate and dispose of alleys and their maintenance responsibilities. Blacksburg has taken a different perspective on alleys and recognizes the benefits of alleys for preserving neighborhoods, providing

service entrances in commercial areas, and utilizing existing rights-of-way for ingress and egress, rather than increasing paved areas. Moreover, *retaining and using* ~~use of~~ existing and new alleys is encouraged throughout Town.

GENERAL POLICIES

- Support the retention and utilization of existing alleys *and unbuilt rights-of-way*.

ACTION STRATEGIES

in general

- *Retain built and unbuilt alleys and right-of-way for future public use.*

- Vacate an alley and unbuilt right-of-way only after an evaluation of its current *and future* function, ~~and~~ a determination that it serves no useful purpose in a neighborhood or in the transportation network, in accordance with the town's alleyway vacation process, *and a determination of the benefits the vacation will provide to the public*.

- *Evaluate and establish an accurate property value for any property to be vacated to ensure the full value is compensated for the vacation.*

Alley and Unbuilt Right-of-Way Vacation Process

1) When requests for a vacation of an alley or unbuilt right-of-way are received by the town,

- make an assessment of the monetary value of the alley or unbuilt rights-of-way according to the general guidelines:
  - residential property value may be estimated according to current assessed values of adjacent property and square footage to be vacated; or
  - when the vacation allows for an additional buildable lot or when the property is non-residential, property value may be established by a formal appraisal; or
  - a formal appraisal may be required ~~when directed~~ by Town Council; **and**
- provide notification to all neighborhood representatives about the vacation request and associated public meetings; **and**
- provide all adjacent property owners an opportunity to apply for an equal right-of-way.
- The cost of any formal appraisal, as may be required, shall be the burden of the applicant.

2) Vacate alleys and unbuilt rights-of-way only when the following three conditions are met:

- The alley or unbuilt right-of-way is judged as not important to the town's neighborhoods in terms of providing rear access for residents, space for utilities, and a means to provide Town services; **and**
- The alley or unbuilt right-of-way is not important to the town's present or future transportation network in terms of automobile, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic; **and**
- The alley or unbuilt right-of-way does not serve as the primary access to parcels.

3) Assess whether or not the alley or unbuilt right-of-way could be used for another public function such as park land or public open space.

4) If there is no other public function to which the property could be used, and the town is able to claim an interest in the alley or unbuilt rights-of-way, and the applicant is willing to remit to the town the value of the alley as computed in 1) above, consider disposition of the alley or unbuilt right-of way.

5) The disposition of an alley or unbuilt right-of-way shall not be acted upon without public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Town Council, duly advertised, in accordance with the Virginia Code.

Alley and Unbuilt Rights-of-Way Retention Recommendation

Right of Way	Recommendation	Reason
End of Eakin Street	Retain	Access to bike path
Country Club Drive, by campus	Retain	Future access should be retained for extension of Country Club and path
Eastview Terrace	Retain	Possible extension for residential development
Lincoln Lane	Retain	Possible extension for residential development
Dehart Street	Retain	Area needed for future Hubbard Street extension
King Street	Retain	Possible pedestrian access
Cedar Hill Drive	Retain	Necessary for future subdivision
Grayland Street	Retain (up to residential)	Access to commercial buildings
Emerald Street Extension	Retain	Possible future alternative route through this neighborhood
Sunrise Drive Middle Link	Retain	Possible extension or bike path
Valleyview Drive	Retain	Possible extension for future development
Washington Street Middle Link	Retain	Possible future connection of Washington Street segments
Clay Street	Retain	Part of Clay Street extension project
Yellow Sulphur & Ramble Rds.	Retain	Part of VDOT ROW for Route 460
Mabry Lane	Retain	Possible future VDOT project (Roanoke Connector)
Eheart Street	Retain	Possible Eheart Street extension
Grove Avenue	Retain	Possible extension of Grove Avenue or bike path
Craig Drive	Retain	Craig Drive extension anticipated with future subdivision plans
Chicahominy Drive	Retain	Part of future Shenandoah project; included in Master Plan for PDR
Pineridge Drive	Retain	Access to Pineridge Drive in Laurel Ridge Subdivision from Tom's Creek
Oriole Drive	Retain	Possible extension of Oriole Drive
Montgomery Street Extension	Retain	Access to undeveloped site; aligned with existing street
Old Roanoke Road-Piedmont to New Roanoke Street, Eastern Link, & Harding to Eastern Link	Retain	Possible street extension or bikeway
Virginia Street in Airport Acres	Retain	May be needed for Hubbard/Country Club extension
First Street	Retain	May be needed for Hubbard/Country Club extension
Second Street	Retain	May be needed for Hubbard/Country Club extension
Airport Road in Airport Acres	Retain	May be needed for Hubbard/Country Club extension
Near Ramble Road 0.6 miles from Industrial Park	Retain	Access to undeveloped site
Lindale Drive	Retain	Access to Shadow Lake Road

Figure T-17, Alley and Unbuilt Rights-of-Way Retention Recommendation

******Note: The above list is not an inclusive list of all rights-of-way within town. Other rights-of-way exist and may not have a specific future use as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. These unlisted rights-of-way should be evaluated under the established Comprehensive Plan Policies and Objectives.******

5. Miller Southside Neighborhood Master Plan

Over the past two years, the Miller Southside Neighborhood has worked to develop a master plan for their neighborhood. With guidance from town staff, the neighborhood master plan task group has finalized the master plan for Planning Commission and Town Council review and consideration for inclusion in the Blacksburg Comprehensive Plan. The plan in its entirety is included as an attachment to this memo. If adopted, the master plan will be the second neighborhood master plan completed and included as an appendix of the Comprehensive Plan.

In response to the Neighborhood Planning Committee and Long Range Planning Committee, a Neighborhood Master Plan Preamble was drafted to be included as part of the Miller Southside amendment. The purpose of the preamble is to highlight the purpose of the neighborhood master plans and how they relate to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed preamble is as follows:

Neighborhood Master Plan Preamble

The Comprehensive Plan provides a concise statement of goals, general policies, and specific strategies for implementing the town's vision. The plan serves as a general guide for the citizens of Blacksburg, Town Council, the Planning Commission, and Town staff, regarding development and redevelopment in the town. This directly impacts the future development pattern in the neighborhoods in the Town of Blacksburg as well as the Town overall.

While a Neighborhood Master Plan provides general policies, and specific strategies for implementing the town's vision, its' focus is neighborhood-specific serving as the neighborhood's input and complement to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In general, the Neighborhood Master Plan provides a higher level of detail showing how townwide visions and policies affect and influence a smaller defined neighborhood. Therefore, general policies and action strategies are more specific and directed towards a more focused topic or issue. This level of detail may not always dovetail with the larger goals, polices, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. A goal of writing Neighborhood Master Plans is to tie action strategies back to the Comprehensive Plan. However, this is not always the case. When reading the Master Plan and using it as a tool to evaluate policies and future projects, one should consider both the Comprehensive Plan and the Neighborhood Master Plan in their entirety. The use of individual statements should not be used exclusively. In some cases, contradictions may be present between policies, goals, and action strategies. This is an inherent part of long range planning. Values, priorities and other circumstances must be considered when attempting to develop a conclusion in the decision making process.

The neighborhood master planning process can function as a consensus-building tool. Neighborhood citizens can use it as a means to focus efforts within their neighborhood.

The process provides a forum for open public discourse and a tool for developing visions, policies, and goals, and strategies to implement them. Each Neighborhood Master Plan is considered as an additional tool to the Town's official Comprehensive Plan when considering development and redevelopment within and affected neighborhood.

6. South End Chapter

Unique Characteristics

There are still large parcels of undeveloped land. These expanses of green space provide a feeling of openness and a rural character for the sector. Wildlife takes sanctuary in the wooded ravines and steep slopes characteristic of this sector. Future parks need to be planned for the area and limited public open space exists throughout the main corridor.

Critical Issues

A Route 460 Blacksburg Interchange will be complete in 2002 by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). This new interchange and its appearance are important to the town, especially for those who live in this sector. The interchange is below grade as much as is feasible for the area, and is as unobtrusive on the surrounding views as possible. Attractive landscaping, green space, litter control, and pedestrian access through the area are essential to softening the project's aesthetics at the town's main entrance. Businesses and homes not directly taken by the highway right-of-way, are primarily concerned with continued access and maintaining scenic views. The construction of this new interchange will create about 36 acres of developable land once VDOT abandons the old interchange. This land is well suited for attractive, high-end commercial use.

There is a lack of public parks and recreational facilities in the sector. The majority of the undeveloped land in this sector is privately held. In addition the closest park to the area residents is Nellie's Cave Park located on the northeastern border of the sector. Acquisition of land to develop a neighborhood or community park in the southern end of the sector, as well as expanding the land and facilities at Nellie's Cave Park is important to meet the recreational needs of this sector.

Provide vegetative buffers and limit the heights of commercial/office uses to reduce the visual impact on the surrounding area and view sheds. This sector is increasingly attractive to office and commercial uses. Limiting the heights of buildings around the Route 460 Blacksburg Interchange will minimize their visual obstruction reinforcing the character of the area, and Blacksburg's primary gateway. A well-planned and landscaped entrance that compliments the area's economic and aesthetic attributes will bring appropriate businesses into the area and further enhance this major entrance into Town.

Farmview/Ramble Neighborhood

Critical Issues

The 36 acres of land that VDOT will vacate once construction of the Route 460 Blacksburg Interchange is complete lies within this neighborhood. Part of this area should be utilized as a public park for the neighborhood with trail connections as appropriate. The town should consider the height and placement of future development on the remaining land to limit impacts on the view shed. Traffic from these developments should not use local roads for their primary access

Special Considerations

A portion of the 36 acres that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will vacate should be utilized as high-end commercial development for a hotel/conference center or professional office space that supports either the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC) or Montgomery Regional Hospital. The remainder of the site should be utilized as a park with connections to the Huckleberry Trail and CRC trail system. Development should be sensitive to height and placement of structures and use appropriate screening and buffering to reduce the visual impact on the surrounding area and to provide an open, well-maintained appearance.

Changes from the Existing Land Use Map

The vacated 36 acres of land near the Route 460 Blacksburg Interchange is designated as Professional Office for the development of a hotel/conference center with appropriately designed open space and trail connection.